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MEXICAN STUDENTS THREATEN TO PROLONG CRISIS

Threats by Mexican students to call a nationwide strike if their demands are not met have intensified government efforts to calm the situation, at least through the Olympics this fall.

The broad student support generated by the issues of university autonomy and police brutality, the apparent predisposition of many youths to resort to violence, and the fact that the current agitation has not even touched upon many of the grievances aired in other recent riots, indicate a highly volatile situation. The government may, therefore, figure it prudent to go further than usual in acceding to such demands as firing the police chief and indemnifying injured students.

President Diaz Ordaz may decide, however, that a more dramatic tactic is needed in view of expanding student demands. Together with their immediate grievances, the students are now calling for the release of all political prisoners. This issue won them the support of leftist former president Lazaro Cardenas, [redacted] Another sensitive area has been reopened with the formation of a teachers' committee to investigate the alleged disappearance of 30 students.

The government's strategy over the past week--temporizing concessions mixed with arm-twisting and encouraging university rectors to make common cause with the students in order to exert a moderating influence--was effective. Two mass student marches took place without disorder, and there has been no significant violence this week.

The pressure on Diaz Ordaz to reconcile the student demands and to restore the government's prestige is particularly intense because of Mexico's desire to project a good image internationally. The preparations for the Olympics in October have involved a tremendous investment, which the government expects to pay off in prestige as well as in enlarged tourist receipts. [redacted]

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